

The Conscription Bill.

The measure proposed by the President to abolish the present military law and adopt a general conscript system, we notice has passed the Senate and has been transmitted to the House of Representatives in secret session, for concurrence. This inaugurates upon the American continent a new feature in a republican form of government—one which we had never dreamed an exigency could arise to justify adoption; but in the wisdom of the Congress of the Confederate States, it appears, has become necessary—indispensable. For the present, at least, this strikes a fatal blow to State sovereignty; it gives to the President more power than the Queen of England possesses, more than the Emperor of France claims, and equalled only to that maintained by the dynasty of the great military chieftain—the illustrious dictator Napoleon Bonaparte. We had hoped that this war would be fought through—fought to the end upon the principles of constitutional law and a free government; and in the absence of the facts that may have operated upon the mind of President Davis, and the minds of the Congress, we are unable to see why it could not have been done more successfully upon those principles than any other. If the other States are true as our own has been, surely the introduction of a measure so despotic, and, in our judgement, unconstitutional in spirit at least, as a wholesale conscription bill, involving the abolition of the sacred contracts entered into between our gallant troops and their respective States, must be, is unnecessary and ill advised. This is our opinion, and anxious as we are, in every respect to support the government, we cannot do less than to say so. We think we know that Virginia, Tennessee, and that portion of Kentucky that is not overrun by the enemy, stand upon an equal footing with North Carolina in this particular, and if the cotton States, that were so fleet to form a new government, have lagged behind, so that the government is about to be impoverished for want of troops, the conscription should have applied to them and not to the border States upon whose soil the battle grounds are made, and that have furnished more than their quota of troops, and that stand ready, reserving their sovereignty to themselves, to furnish all in their own way, that the government, upon principles of equality or justice, will require of them. Had not our State kept her quota in the field, had she not when the last requisition was made, furnished two men for every one that was called for, we should have felt disposed, upon the adoption of a general conscription bill, to have said less; but under the circumstances, without the light that Congress may have had before it, while we counsel acquiescence, and will ever strenuously oppose rebellion to law, we are bound to protest against it as an over-reach of power, and to the people a fearful leap in the dark. The world as yet has never produced but one George Washington. It may be that President Davis or his successor may have vested in him the power of an Emperor or a potentate, and when the enemies of our country are driven from our soil, will hand back to the people the unstained chart of constitutional liberty; but even then, we would much prefer that in none of its provisions it had been taken from them. We think it would be respected more and held and preserved in higher repute.

A Constitution in this respect may be compared to the chastity of women. If once her virtue is violated no matter how beautiful may be her features, how symmetrical her form or elegant her accomplishments, her respectability in the eyes of the world is forever gone.—So it is with the Constitution of a government, let it once be violated, trampled upon or disregarded, and the prestige of its power is broken, its respectability among men is lost, and it becomes rather an instrument of oppression than a bulwark of freedom to a free and independent people. Seeing, too, the results of a violated Constitution in the old government, we would have our young republic beware of blighted faith, to adhere to a strict construction of that sacred instrument, and in no case give just cause of alarm or dissatisfaction to its people.

Party Spirit.

No paper in North Carolina since the war began has had so much to say in condemnation of party spirit as the N. C. Standard, yet when every other paper, we believe, in the State of all parties, has come out flatly opposed to a political canvass in the present juncture of affairs the ensuing summer for the office of Governor, we are not a little surprised to find, in the last issue of the paper above named, the following language;

We repeat, honest men do not fear discussion before the people; and if the people cannot bear discussion, then have they ceased to be competent to govern themselves. It is only the selfish, the venal, and the guilty, who fear a full and fair discussion of public affairs.

What issues are their now before the people of North Carolina upon which the Standard desires a discussion? Has that paper propositions to make in regard to the war? Everybody knows that the prosecution of the war has been by the Convention of which the editor is a member, turned over to the Confederate Government. Then, if the war is to move forward, we can see no good that can come of a gubernatorial canvass upon this subject. If, however, the Standard wishes to present a *fishy* proposition, introduce a *retrograde motion*, which we cannot believe it does, we tell it that it is too late, the people of North Carolina will entertain no such propositions as that *now*. For what purpose then does the Standard desire a political canvass? Something near fifty thousand of our voting population are from home and in camp; and is it the policy of the Standard that the candidates shall go after these, hunt them up, and harangue them in their trenches and behind their fortifications? Is this the editors plan for whipping the enemy and establishing our independence! It seems to us a strange idea. But wherever there is a discussion there must be two sides to the question—one for and the other against. Will the Standard's candidate take the negative of the war question? If not how can there be a discussion? The truth is all this ado for a canvass and a discussion now is folly in the extreme and would result in all probability in the worst of consequences. We protest against it. We have no idea that there are two gentlemen in the State worthy to fill the Gubernatorial chair, who would for a moment entertain the proposition for a canvass and a discussion until the war shall have been ended.

We pass over in silence the peevish and illiberal imputation cast upon the members of the press and all others who think such a canvass now improper, by merely adding what the Charlotte Democrat has said:

This is a sweeping charge against nearly every paper in the State. The Salisbury Watchman, Iredell Express, Shelby Eagle, Asheville News, Franklin Carolinian, Concord Flag, Greensboro Patriot, Winston Sentinel, Raleigh Journal, Raleigh Register, and Wilmington Journal, have all expressed opposition to a canvass by candidates and discussions while the country is involved in war; and we believe all the other papers in the State, except the Raleigh Standard, are opposed to a canvass. Yet the Standard charges that it is only the selfish, the venal, and the guilty, who fear a full and fair discussion of public affairs. Its insinuation that those who oppose a canvass are dishonest, is too contemptible to notice, more than to say that it does not become the editor of the Standard to talk about honesty, considering his past course. And neither does it become him to talk about patronage. We have received but little government patronage (not more than most of the other papers in the State) while the editor of the Standard has grown rich off of such patronage, and got mad when the Legislature and Convention thought proper to give some of the State patronage to other Raleigh papers. Indeed, the Raleigh Standard is the last paper in the State that ought to talk about patronage. Those who live in glass houses should not indulge in the sport of throwing stones.

We notice that the towns and cities generally in North Carolina have been holding meetings and contributing to the cause of the South their bells for the purpose of having them cast into cannon. In the towns of Salem and Winston there are several most excellent church bells; these might, it occurs to us, be made into a fine field piece that would be of more use to the country in this way, than that in which they are now applied. We know that the citizens of Winston and Salem have done more already by far than a relative share in the prosecution of the war, both in the contribution of men and money, but there is yet much to be done, and while the war lasts the people must make up their minds continually to aid in its successful termination. Then why not contribute the bells? The example might be worth a hundred guns, and for the want of a hundred guns our cause might be greatly damaged. Who responds? Let the ladies take the matter in hand, call a meeting, and lay their church bells upon the altar of their country as they would their hearts.

VERY LATEST NEWS.—The Conscription Bill has passed Congress. A telegraphic dispatch from Memphis states that Northern papers received there give the Federal loss at Shiloh at 20,000. General Buell was mortally wounded. Gens. Crittenden, Sherman and the two Wallace's were killed. Four Yankee regiments are said to have laid down their arms at Nashville and refused to fight for Lincoln any more. The Yankees say an immense battle will be fought on the Peninsula shortly, and are making preparations accordingly.

An Iron Clad Boat for North Carolina.

We learn from the Wilmington Journal that measures have been taken there for the purpose of constructing an iron clad gun boat or battery, designed for the protection of that place and the Cape Fear country generally. A meeting was held and a committee of prominent citizens appointed to solicit subscriptions with the view of ascertaining if the necessary funds could be raised. We cannot doubt but that the necessary funds can be procured and hope to see the work energetically prosecuted. Cannot something be done in this section for this absolutely necessary purpose? We think if the proper measures were taken and the matter prominently brought before our people, considerable would be contributed. A very respectable sum has already been tendered in Wilmington and by parties in the surrounding section; even previous to any organized arrangement contributions for this purpose were liberally offered.

It is positively necessary to secure the successful defense of the remaining cities and towns not in the hands of the enemy, that boats of this description be built, and that speedily. The North is now putting forth all her energies to complete such vessels, and we must be ready to meet them, or at once surrender all our forts and ports into their hands. Let a determined effort be made and North Carolina have the honor of having built at least one iron clad vessel of sufficient strength to resist the Yankees, and protect the section designed by her construction. South Carolina and Georgia are both moving in this matter with every prospect of complete success.

Among the resolutions adopted at the public meeting of the citizens of Wilmington, it was Resolved, That the citizens of the several counties of the State are requested to organize Committees to solicit contributions and otherwise to co-operate with the Committee of Safety of Wilmington in furtherance of the proposed work.

The following gentleman were appointed the committee above referred to, communications to either of them will receive attention: O. G. PARSLY, A. J. DEROSSET, W. A. WRIGHT.

The wheat crop in this section looks unusually promising, as much so as we ever recollect witnessing at this season of the year. The breadth of land seeded with this grain has also been larger this year than common, thus if the present favorable prospect continues until the crop is harvested, we shall have enough and to spare for less favoured localities. We trust that but little if any tobacco will be grown in this season, and our farmers turn their attention to raising corn in its stead. In this connection we have concluded to lay before our readers a communication in the Western Democrat, from Prof. Kerr of Davidson College. There is little doubt of the correctness of the reasoning and utility of the suggestions therein made, and we commend it to the attention of our farming friends.

From the Western Democrat.

MR. EDITOR:

Will you allow me space in your columns for a few practical suggestions to the farmers of Mecklenburg and the neighboring counties. It is of the gravest importance not only to them, but to the country that they should produce as large a crop as possible—and the season has been so far very unfavorable. The farmers in this region do not generally prepare their land sufficiently by fall and winter plowing, and especially by deep plowing, to induce the soil to put forth its full strength on the corn crop. But owing to the unusual quantity of rain during the past winter and the spring so far, there has been no preparation at all by most farmers. And in addition to this, the ground has been kept saturated with cold water, by the universal quantity of north-east rains, and the extreme cloudiness of the weather, we have had much less than the usual quantity of sunshine, and so the temperature of the soil is much below the average for this season; the grain therefore will not germinate readily, a large replanting will be necessary, and that which does get above ground will be stunted and dwarfed in its growth. The question is, under these conditions, how to produce the largest crop. Before making the proposed suggestions towards an answer to this question, I must call attention to another condition not peculiar to this season. It is generally apprehended that we shall have a dry summer, on account of the great amount of rain which has already fallen; since, as is supposed, the same quantity nearly may be expected to fall every year. This prevalent notion of an equal annual quantity of rain is not true.—There is for every locality of course an annual average; which for this region is about forty

five inches; but one year the whole quantity does not reach thirty inches, and another it rises to seventy five. So that although we have had already a fall of some fifteen inches, one-third of the annual average, yet we may still have more than the average quantity for the remainder of the year. The apprehension, therefore, which is so common, of a dry season, is, so far as founded on this hypothesis, groundless. But the distribution of the rains through the different seasons of the year is a matter of quite as much consequence as the quantity. If the corn crop does not get rain during a certain critical period of its growth for three or four weeks, it will fail, no matter what quantity may fall before or afterwards. Now, the distribution of the rain is not uniform over any large district, but varies often from one neighborhood to another, as every farmer knows. The country is subdivided into small districts limited by the various features of the surface; that is by water courses, high ridges, water sheds dividing river systems, &c.

Along the dividing ridge between the Catawba and Yadkin running through Iredell and Mecklenburg, the distribution of the summer rains is such as to endanger at least every third crop to the extent of twenty to fifty per cent. By a series of observations continued through four years at Davidson College, I have found that the corn reaches its critical stage from three to five weeks too soon. And by planting with reference to this observation for three years past a full crop has been secured, while their was a partial failure in the neighborhood two of those years.

The suggestion then which I would make to the farmers of this section, and to others similarly situated are obvious. They are intended to meet the conditions maintained, viz: a cold wet soil, as yet untended, and the probability of a "dry spell" when the grain is usually in its forming stage and most needs moisture. I would say to the farmers then, do not be in haste to plant your corn, but lay your plans for planting from four to six weeks later than usual. Employ this time in turning over the soil to as great a depth as possible, in order to admit the air and sunshine, to dry and warm and pulverize and fertilize it, and at the same time prepare it to retain the moisture of our scanty summer rains. List up your land, throw it into ridges, with a two-horse plow. In this way a large surface is exposed, and a greater depth secured for the roots of the plant, which enables it better to resist drought. And we do not often have an excess of rain in June and July. Plant your corn the second and third weeks of May. In this way you will find that it will grow so fast that you will not be able to work it more than three times; and it makes a better crop with two workings than with four when planted at the usual time in the usual way.

The News.

We have but little news from the army in the Rappahannock valley. It is said that the Confederates are scouting as far as their old quarters in the vicinity of Manassas, the Yankees from all appearances, having retired to Washington, or thereabouts.

On the Peninsula there has been no regular battle as yet, but almost daily skirmishing has been going on. It is considered certain that McClellan has arrived on the Peninsula with large reinforcements and that his army now numbers 100,000 to 125,000 men. He expects to reach Richmond by this route and a battle between the contending forces is said to be imminent and cannot be long delayed.

The Virginia ran out from Norfolk on Friday last, and captured three Ysnkee vessels and brought them safely to port. She also remained out the entire day endeavoring to draw the Monitor out into an engagement, but after all the Northern boasting of what the Monitor intended to do with the Virginia when she next appeared, she would not enter the contest, but remained at Fortress Monroe.

We hear nothing concerning Burnside's movements. He is said to be fortifying at Newbern, and that the majority of his forces are at that place. We learn that in a skirmish near Trenton in Jones county in the early part of this week Lieut. Col. Robison of Spurill's cavalry was badly wounded. The first report stated that he was killed. Col. Robison is a son of the associate editor of the State Journal, and said to be an excellent officer.

From South Carolina we have nothing whatever. In Georgia a reverse has been sustained by our arms. Fort Pulaski on the Savannah has surrendered to the invaders after a desperate resistance. It was completely cut off from all communication with our forces, and taken by the Yankees by means of heavy batteries erected in the rear or rather flank of the fort, where it was least able to sustain an attack. About 400 men were in the fort who are now in the enemies hands. There are yet other defences protecting Savannah, and the Yankees before reaching that city will have hard fighting to do.

Nothing from places further South.

From Corinth in Mississippi, we have various accounts, but they all agree that the success of the Confederates was greater than anticipated. The fight on Sunday resulted in a complete victory for